

4. (original) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said beads are comprised of styrene and divinylbenzene.
5. (previously presented) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said talc has a size range from about 2 microns to about 40 microns.
6. (cancelled)
7. (original) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said carrier consist essentially of oils, hydrocarbon oils, vegetable oils, mineral oils, paraffin oils, synthetic oils, diesel oils, esters, glycols, cellulose and olefins.
8. (original) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said carrier comprises soybean oil.
9. (previously presented) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said talc comprises from about 2 % to about 50 % of said additive mixture.
10. (original) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said carrier comprises from about 50 % to about 98 % of said additive mixture.
11. (previously presented) The drilling fluid additive mixture of Claim 1 wherein said beads comprises from about 2 % to about 50 % of said additive mixture.
12. (previously presented) A method of manufacturing a drilling fluid additive mixture, said method comprising:
 - shearing talc with at least one carrier to create a suspended mixture to thereby allow the surface of said talc to be pre-wet with said carrier, said carrier being selected from a group consisting of oils, glycols, esters, olefins and mixtures thereof ; and
 - admixing copolymer beads to said suspended mixture.

13. (cancelled)

14. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said beads have a specific gravity at from about 1.0 to about 1.5 and a size from about 40 microns to about 1500 microns.

15. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said beads are comprised of styrene and divinylbenzene.

16. (previously presented) The method of Claim 12 wherein said talc has a size range from about 2 microns to about 40 microns.

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said carrier comprises polypropylene glycol.

20. (previously presented) The method of Claim 12 wherein said talc comprises from about 2 % to about 50 % of said additive mixture.

21. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said carrier comprises from about 50% to about 98 % of said additive mixture.

22. (original) The method of Claim 12 wherein said beads comprises from about 2 % to about 50 % of said additive mixture.

23. (previously presented) A method of improving the filter cake composition of a water-based drilling fluid, said method comprising:

shearing talc with at least one carrier to create a suspended mixture to thereby allow said talc to be pre-wet with said carrier, said carrier being selected from a group consisting of oils, glycols, esters, olefins and mixtures thereof;

admixing copolymer beads to said suspended mixture thereby allowing said beads to be pre-wet with said carrier and shearing until a homogeneous mixture is formed;

adding said suspended mixture to a water-based drilling fluid; and

pumping said additive into a well bore.

24. (cancelled)

25. (original) The method of Claim 23 wherein said beads have a specific gravity at from about 1.0 to about 1.5 and a size from about 40 microns to about 1500 microns, said beads are comprised of styrene and divinylbenzene.

26. (previously presented) The method of Claim 23 wherein said talc has a size range from about 2 microns to about 40 microns.

27. (cancelled)

28. (cancelled)

29. (original) The method of Claim 23 wherein said carrier comprises oil and glycol.

30. (currently amended) The method of Claim 23 wherein said talc comprises from about 2 % to about ~~50~~ 25% of said additive mixture, said carrier comprises from about 50 % to about 96 % of said additive mixture, and said beads comprises from about 2 % to about ~~50~~ 25% of said additive mixture.

31. (previously presented) A drilling fluid additive comprising: talc, copolymer beads and at least one carrier, said carrier being selected from a group consisting of oils, glycols, esters, olefins and mixtures thereof.

32. (previously presented) The drilling fluid additive of Claim 31 wherein said beads have a specific gravity at from about 1.0 to about 1.5 and a size from about 40 microns to about 1500 microns, said beads are comprised of a material selected from a group consisting of styrene, divinylbenzene and mixtures thereof.

33. (currently amended) The drilling fluid additive of Claim 31 wherein said talc comprises from about 2 % to about ~~50~~ 25% of said additive mixture, said carrier comprises from about 50 % to about 96 % of said additive mixture, and said beads comprise from about 2 % to about ~~50~~ 25% of said additive mixture.